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CIA official denies Rewald claims

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Honolulu, Hawaii — There is no CIA record to substantiate Ronald Rewald's claim that he infiltrated student groups in Wisconsin for the agency, a top CIA security official testified Friday.

Rewald, on trial for fraud, perjury and tax evasion in connection with the collapse of his investment firm here in 1983, has said the firm was a CIA cover and an extension of a CIA association that began in the 1960s.

Mitchell P. Lawrence, a deputy director in the CIA's office of security, said the first CIA security check on Rewald was run in July 1978.

There was no previous record of Rewald in any CIA files, Lawrence said. If such a record had existed earlier and had been routinely destroyed, a check of Rewald's name would have revealed the previous record, Lawrence said.

A student infiltration program code-named CHAOS was exposed in Congressional hearings in the mid 1970s. The CIA has not acknowledged

running the operation, but Lawrence spoke of it Friday as if it were a CIA project.

If Rewald had been associated with such a project or paid for such work as he claims, CIA records would reflect his involvement, Lawrence said.

A July 6, 1978, name check on Rewald was marked by the CIA "new request" after a review of existing records, according to a document introduced Friday. "This indicates there has never been a request before," Lawrence said.

In a confidential affidavit filed in bankruptcy proceedings, Rewald said a CIA official had recruited him in the early 1960s when he was attending the Milwaukee Institute of Technology, now the Milwaukee Area Technical College.

Rewald said in the affidavit that he and another student were sent to the University of Wisconsin — Madison to infiltrate radical student groups. He said he spent 9 to 10 months going to the campus and attending meetings. He said he was paid about \$120 a week in cash for the work.